

Addendum to Gibsonville Biological Assessment and Evaluation -

The following addendum displays changes made in the Gibsonville Healthy Forest Restoration Environmental Assessment (USDA Forest Service 2017). During an earlier objection resolution period it was discovered that the estimated harvest volumes exceeded the delegated authorities of the District Ranger. The Forest Supervisor decided to withdraw the project as was and to resubmit it for public comment after review. Based on comments from public, SO, and RO staffs, changes were made to the action alternatives. Alternative B is designed to meet standards and guidelines of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (USDA Forest Service 2004). Alternative C is designed to meet the recommendations in the Draft Interim Recommendations (IR) for the Management of California Spotted Owl Habitat (USDA Forest Service 2015). Region 5 is in the process of developing a new conservation strategy for the California spotted owl throughout its range in California. The IR recommended measures are intended to inform changes to existing management that are likely to reduce risks to the California spotted owl and to enhance management's ability to meet the current goals for the conservation of the species until a more comprehensive conservation strategy can be developed or implemented (USDA Forest Service 2015).

This addendum presents a summary of changes to the action alternatives, and the resulting changes to effects by the revised alternatives to Threatened and Endangered Species (TES) of Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife. The original analysis documents have not been changed and acres are not reflective of these changes throughout the attached Terrestrial and Aquatic Biological Assessment and Evaluation (USDA Forest Service 2016a, b). Revising the entire Biological Assessment and Evaluation (BA_BE) document was not required due to the reduced direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to TES Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife by the proposed revised alternatives. This addendum presents the overall changes in the type and acres (Table 1) proposed for treatment and the overall changes in effects. Both Alternatives B & C consist of mechanical treatments being reduced in intensity or changed to hand treatments. No changes to greater intensity are proposed. Some of the previous variable density thinning has been revised to townsite treatment and biomass and also thinning from below and biomass which will improve forest health indicators and fuels conditions while maintaining higher canopy covers.

Reference Figures 1 & 2 of the relationship of the proposed treatments in the action alternatives B & C in relation to the PAC's, IR territory and HRCA's.

In addition, the District Planning team made additional changes to the action alternatives in which overall the impacts to all TES Terrestrial and Aquatic species has less direct and indirect effects by treatments that are "lighter on the land".

Following is a list of the changes to the Action Alternatives:

1. Alternative B & C decision was made to not retain 10-15% canopy cover within the acres directly treated for Aspen release (~15 acres) and instead provide the canopy cover in the larger aspen unit (23 acres) in which the treatment prescribed Variable Density Thinning.
2. Alternative B: Treatments went from VDT 40% within the HRCA to Thinning from Below.
Alternative C: treatments went from Mastication in PAC and IR Territory Designated Habitat, to No mechanical treatments and instead HCPB and Under-burn within the PAC and IR Territory.
3. Alternative C: A decision was made by the Forest to remove about 40 acres of IR Territory Designated Habitat that was beyond the 4,400 acre Home Range and exceed the 1,000 acre

minimum to facilitate applying mechanical to reduce fuels in units that fell into “corporate” HRCA outside of the Home Range circle.

4. In the previous narratives some stands were depicted as roadside hazards and the primary treatment and in other stands the roadside hazards weren’t shown. In the revised document roadside hazards are presented in linear miles.

Table 1. Crosswalk of Treatments and Acres from January 2017 EA to October 2017 EA

Treatment (January 2017)	Sum of Acres		Treatment (October 2017)	Sum of Acres	
	Alt B	Alt C		Alt B	Alt C
Variable Density Thinning and Under Burn and Biomass	359.1	243.4	VDT and Biomass and Under Burn	202.0	202.0
			Thinning from Below & Biomass & UB	59.8	0
			Townsite Treatment (no burning)	41.3	41.3
Aspen Release and Biomass	22.8	22.8	Aspen Release and Biomass	22.8	22.8
Meadow Restoration and Biomass	8.9	8.9	Meadow Restoration and Biomass	8.9	8.9
Riparian Restoration (no mechanical)	15.8	15.8	Riparian Restoration (no mechanical)	15.8	15.8
Masticate & Under Burn & Biomass	26.3	26.3	Mastication or Biomass	171.1	77.7
RSHT and HCPB and Biomass	60.6	60.6			
Masticate and Under Burn	18.1	18.1			
Masticate or HCPB and Under Burn	136.7	136.7			
RSHT and Hand Cut Pile Burn	60.6	60.6	Hand Cut Pile Burn and Under Burn	472.8	653.7
Hand Cut Pile Burn and Under Burn	54.4	54.4			
Under Burn (only)	7.1	7.1	Prescribed Fire (Underburning) Only	32.2	32.2
No Treatment	146.0	171.2	No Treatment	173.7	146.0
Grand Total	1200	1200	Grand Total	1200	1200

- Beige coloring includes some form of mechanical treatment whether in primary or secondary prescriptions, blue coloring has no mechanical treatment element.
- Project includes 5.5 miles of roadside hazard tree abatement. In Alternative C felled hazard trees will be left in place on ~1.75 miles of roads inside designated habitat.

Figure 1. Alternative B

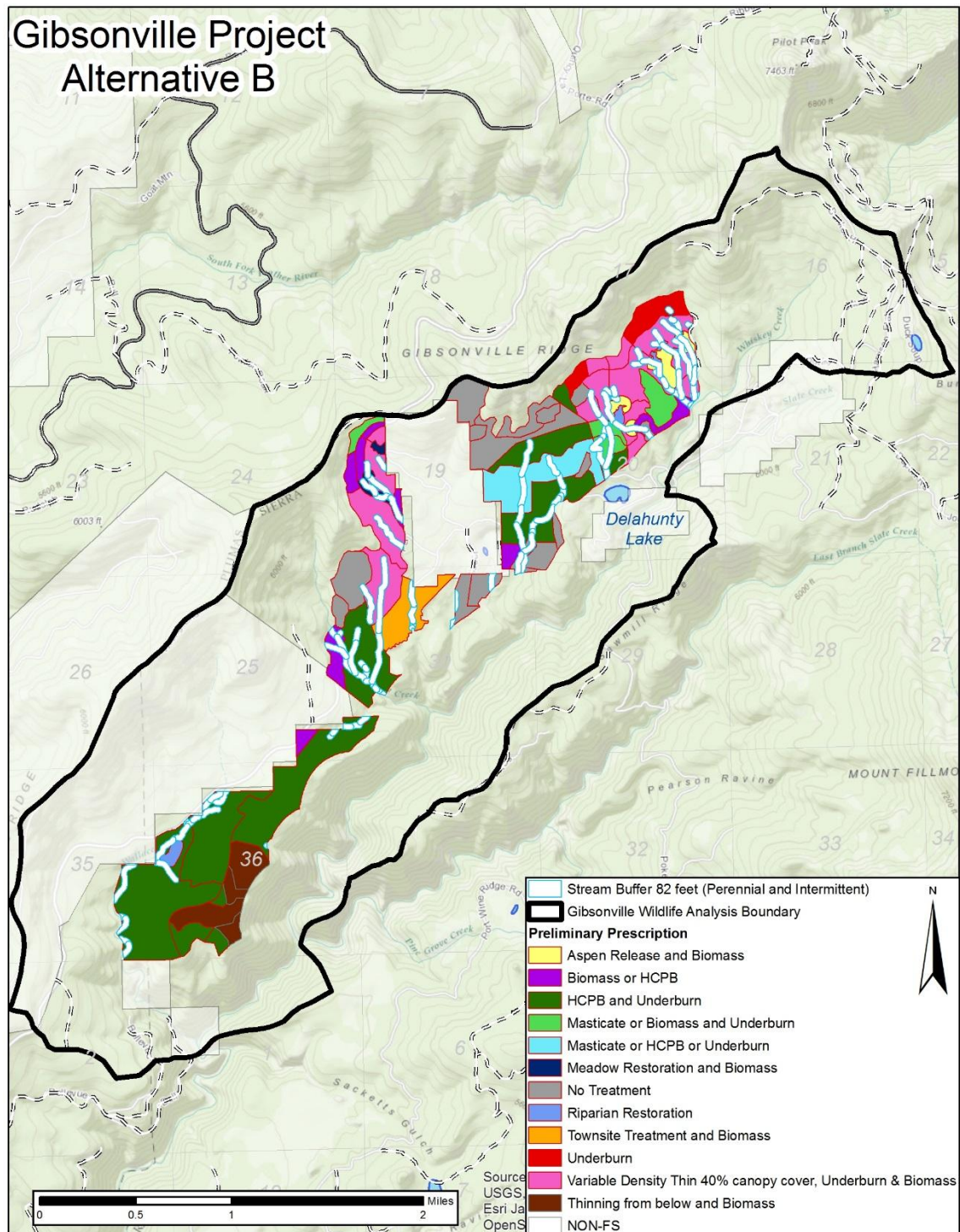
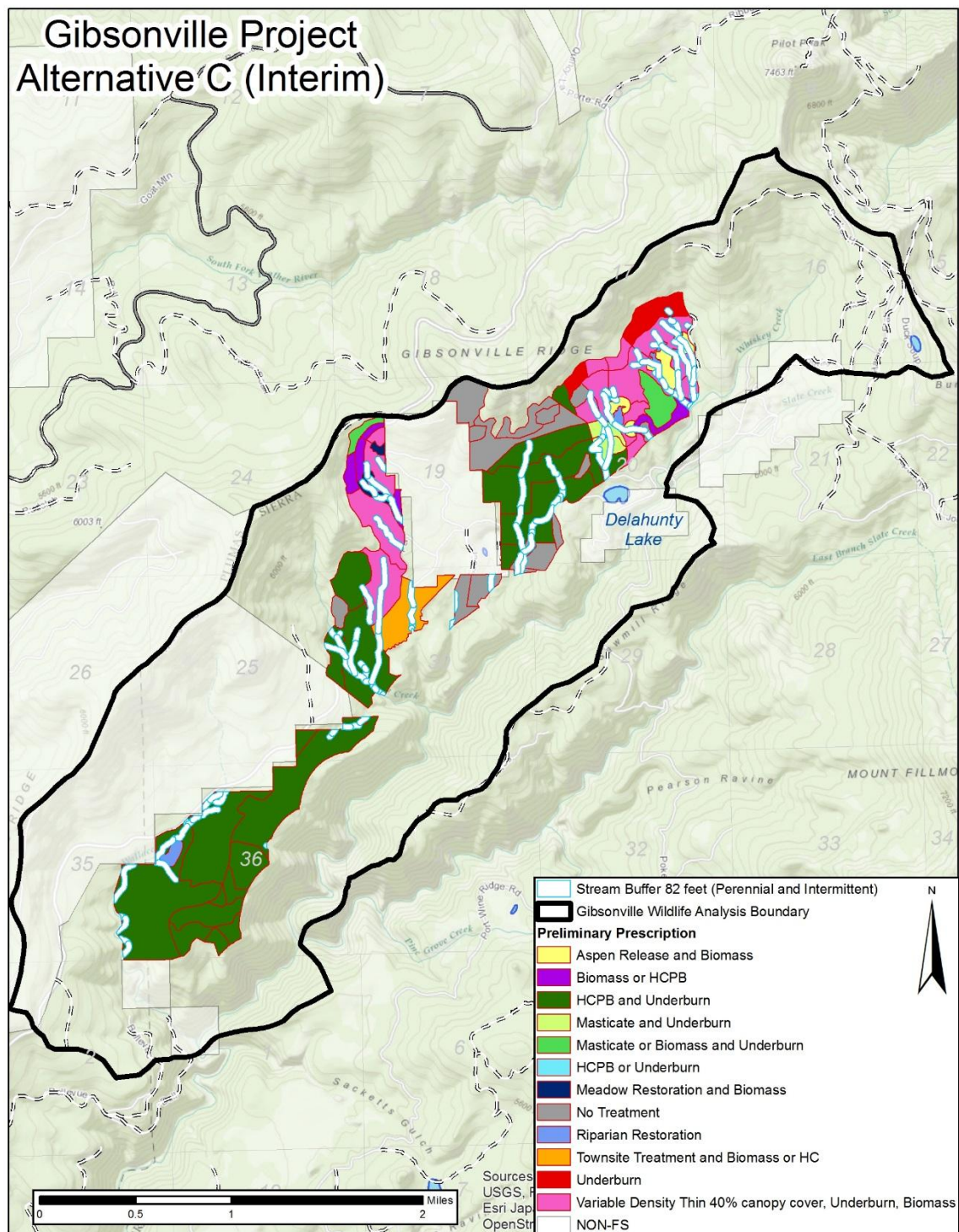


Figure 2. Alternative C



Changes in Effects by revised Action Alternatives B & C:

The revised alternative B (Table 1) overall has reduced acres of mechanical treatments (- 126.6 acres) and/or proposes treatments of lesser intensity (thinning from below, mastication or biomass, hand cutting and prescribed fire. Alternative C replaced all mechanical treatments with hand treatments within Interim Recommendations designated habitat (PAC's and 700 acre IR Territory). In the short term, alternatives B & C will have less direct and indirect effects to all TES aquatic and terrestrial wildlife analyzed in the project by these revised action alternatives.

The long term, alternatives B & C may have a greater direct and indirect effects to TES aquatic and terrestrial species due to these hand treatments "re-grow", increasing the potential for high severity wildfire and with direct loss to species and indirectly to their habitat. In regards to the California spotted owl; with the revised alternatives B & C; designated habitat (PAC, IR Territory & HRCA) will again be treated by HCPB and Underburn, and with this regrowth potential have a greater potential for loss of the species and habitat due to catastrophic wildfire.

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Literature Cited

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